

# THE ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMED FORCE- ITS FEASIBILITY AND IMPLICATIONS

by

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*(Why is an all-volunteer armed force needed? Is such a force achievable? Is it desirable? What are some of the objections to an all-volunteer force? What must be done to make the all-volunteer force workable?)*

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I am announcing today that the Army is committed to an all-out effort in working toward a zero draft—a volunteer force.

—General William C. Westmoreland  
October 13, 1970

With these words, the Chief of Staff, United States Army, formally committed the Army to an all-out effort to achieve an all-volunteer force. "In accepting this challenge," General Westmoreland said, "we in the Army will bend every effort to achieve our goal."

It was apparent from the beginning that putting this resolution into effect would not be as simple as its announcement. It came at a time when there were unprecedented public

attacks on the military; when the public prestige of the military seemed never to have been lower; when necessary Congressional support was questionable; when the youth of this nation, from whom the volunteers must flow, were conditioned against military service by antiwar sentiments, antiwar demonstrations, and the open dispensing of information on how to beat the draft.

The volunteer force concept struck a vibrant emotional chord among military professionals, public officials and private citizens. It set the stage for indictment rather than rational thinking and there emerged a diverse array of opinions. Too often these positions and counterpositions are based upon half-truths, inadequate data, undocumented assertions or simple emotion, rather than upon detached investigation. The purpose of this paper is to determine what the issues are, then to examine them objectively. The matter of determining the validity of the volunteer force concept must be left to the future, when data will be available regarding its successes and failures in practice.

## HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Looking back for a moment, we see what is often overlooked: that for over 160 years, except for periods of major wars, there was no compulsory military service in the United States. Traditionally, the defense strategy of this country has been based instead upon a small professional force, reinforced by a large trained manpower reserve.

Although the Militia Act of 1792 established a policy of universal military obligation, the American people have always associated that obligation with total national emergency. Consequently, it has been viewed

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as a wartime obligation. Only since 1948 has the draft become a permanent part of our manpower procurement policy, beginning in the nineteen fifties and sixties to take on the sense of a long-standing American tradition. Until the mid-sixties Americans accepted conscription as a way of life. In large part, interest in selective service was dampened by a growing manpower pool and low monthly draft calls which resulted in an ever decreasing percentage of those required to serve.

The Vietnam buildup, however, brought much larger draft calls and increased vulnerability to involuntary military service. It brought also a surge of antiwar and antimilitary sentiment. Although the protest movement found its roots on the college campuses, the controversy soon spread to the society at large, developing into an incredibly complex national debate which involved many issues that challenged the fundamental philosophy underlying the domestic and international policies of our nation. Thus we entered the seventies with an unprecedented attack on the integrity of the government, the values of the armed forces, and increased pressure for abolition of the draft.

### THE BASIC ISSUE

The need to do something about the pressing social problems in our country, such as the plight of our cities, poverty, ecology, and education, is clearly evident. But our efforts to solve these problems may very well be wasted if our nation has no effective military force to support her national interest. Thus we must accept the premise that the United States needs a strong military force; and once this premise is accepted, the question then becomes how best to raise and maintain that force in a democratic society.

Three major alternatives have been advanced: the first is to reform and continue selective service; second is to move to a completely volunteer military establishment—an all-volunteer force; and third is to develop some form of national service.

Whatever manpower procurement program evolves, it must not only supply military

requirements in terms of quantity and quality but also be viable under peacetime and wartime conditions. One of the vital lessons of past wars is that volunteers will not produce the manpower needed for large scale or protracted conflict;<sup>2</sup> some form of selective service must operate, whether it is actively engaged in the induction of men or simply serves to register, examine, and classify men on a standby basis.

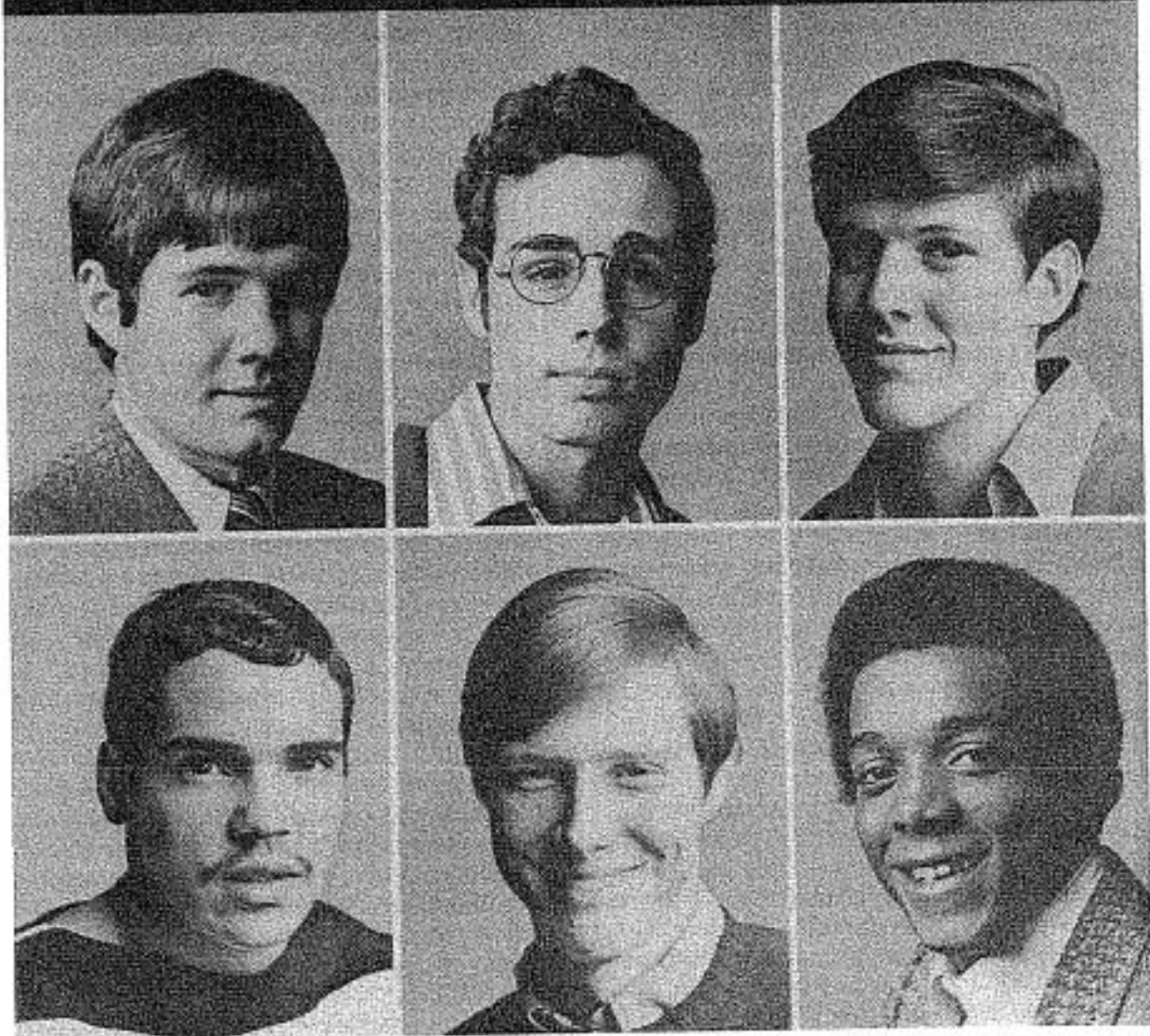
In the event of a transition to a completely volunteer armed force, the draft would be necessary until manpower strengths were met through enlistments; thereafter, a standby draft authority would be necessary to insure that national security requirements were satisfied. Similarly, in the event of adoption of a national service concept, selective service would have a role. Therefore, the Selective Service System is central to any manpower procurement policy.

The Selective Service System became the subject of comprehensive Congressional hearings beginning in 1969. As a result, on November 26, 1969, draft reform legislation which authorized the use of lottery was signed into law. Subsequently, President Nixon, with the consent of Congress, issued a series of Executive Orders which discontinued occupational, paternity, and student deferments (except for those engaged in officer-producing programs such as ROTC or those "vital" to the national interest).

While much has been done to improve the Selective Service System, inequity has not been removed. This was recognized by President Nixon when he stated "... there will be inequity as long as any of our young men have to serve when others do not have to serve."<sup>3</sup> In keeping with this philosophy, the President directed the Department of Defense to take actions designed to reduce reliance on the draft and established the all-volunteer force as a national objective.<sup>4</sup>

When to shift from a draft-supported to an all-volunteer force is a difficult question, but the Department of Defense has set July 1, 1973 as the present goal for achieving zero inductions. Coincidentally, the 92nd Congress extended induction authority for only two years (to July 1, 1973) instead of the usual

# Today's Army wants to join you.



four, and placed yearly ceilings on the number of men who can be inducted into the armed forces.

No one can predict whether the all-volunteer force will become a workable reality. The concept has great appeal, since a force composed solely of volunteers would blunt antimilitary attacks by the expedient of avoiding conscription. The hope is that pay and other benefits would substitute for compulsion as a means of obtaining the quantity and quality of personnel required. This seemingly desirable solution, however, is replete with pitfalls which must be considered carefully.

### QUANTITY

Quantity is central to feasibility. Without enough volunteers to fill the ranks, an all-volunteer armed force is impossible.

The last time the United States tried an all-volunteer force was in 1947. The draft law which had been in effect since 1940 was allowed to expire. To compensate for the loss of draftees, recruiting programs were reorganized and intensified and recruiter strength increased. The Army introduced enlistment options to include choice of geographic locations and specific organizations. The Army also experimented with one-year and eighteen-month periods of service. In spite of these efforts, by January 1948 the armed forces had dropped 15 percent below authorized levels. With an authorized strength of 669,000, the Army had only 550,000 men in uniform.<sup>5</sup> The National Guard, authorized at 450,000 men, had only 290,000,<sup>6</sup> while the Army Reserve became largely a paper organization which had not trained for two years. In March 1948, President Truman asked Congress to revive the draft.

The new Selective Service Act was signed into law in June 1948. In spite of a subsequent one-third cut in Army recruiting strength and the actual drafting of only 35,000 during November and December 1948 and January 1949, Army strength rose by about 100,000 by the end of June 1949.<sup>7</sup>

While the 1947-48 attempt at sustaining a

volunteer force left the services with too few men, it should be recognized that this experience demonstrated only the difficulty—and not the impossibility—of achieving a viable all-volunteer force. That effort, almost a quarter of a century ago, was limited. The manpower pool was considerably smaller and, most important, there was no real attempt to attract volunteers through adequate pay and other benefits.

The current attempt to achieve an all-volunteer force is set in the context of a significant cutback in the desired force level. As a result of Vietnam withdrawals and economy actions, total active duty strength should return (from a peak of 3.5 million reached in 1968) to pre-Vietnam level of 2.5 million, or even less in the foreseeable future.

To maintain an armed force of 2.5 million men, approximately 500,000 new accessions are required each year. Historically, we could expect 350,000 of these to be supplied by first-term enlistments and 150,000 by inductions. However, in the absence of the draft, not only the 150,000 inductees would be lost, but also those many thousands of first-term regular enlistees who were motivated to enlist because of the draft.

Estimates of the percentage of draft-induced enlistments vary by source. Two surveys conducted by the Department of Defense in 1964 and 1968 revealed that draft motivation had risen from 38 percent in 1964 to 54 percent in 1968.<sup>8</sup> Indications are that today it probably exceeds 60 percent. In the context of a completely volunteer force, this has serious implications.

The President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force believes the loss of these men can be offset and reported to the President in early 1970 that an all-volunteer armed force was feasible and more desirable than a mixed force of volunteers and conscripts.<sup>9</sup> The central thrust of the Commission's approach to achieving an all-volunteer force was a substantial increase in military pay with particular emphasis on men serving their first term in the armed forces.

Army manpower planners expressed serious misgivings about the Commission's

methodology. While it is recognized that pay is a powerful motivator, frequently other factors, such as job satisfaction, decent housing, and public respect become more important. Moreover, in projecting the capability to attract volunteers, the Commission based its calculations for the FY 1970-80 time frame on the military's pre-Vietnam enlistment experience. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that the behavior patterns of potential enlistees in the post-Vietnam period will be the same as those which existed before Vietnam. This assumption fails to recognize that attitudes toward military service have changed markedly since 1965, thus impairing recruitment seriously.

We now know that the Army's misgivings were sound. The Commission underestimated the Army's FY 1972 accession requirements by 40 percent. In addition, the number of true volunteers the Army expects in FY 1972 was overestimated.

In approximating the number of required recruits for military service, attention has been directed only to the Army's manpower deficits. This procedure involves the assumption that if the Army's manpower demands can be met, the other services will be able to staff their forces with volunteers.

There is a major limitation inherent in this approach. Although the analysis leans toward the Army's requirements relative to other services, there is an implicit assumption that all branches in the Army have equal drawing power for volunteers. Before initiation of the Modern Volunteer Army Program, fewer than 5 percent of all Army enlistments were for the combat arms (Infantry, Armor, and Artillery) and only about 1.7 percent of all enlistees chose the Infantry.<sup>10</sup> Due to occupational hazards and discomfort, combat arms requirements are harder to fill than non-combat arms skills. Therefore, an overall Army manpower supply factor which assumes perfect substitution among branches of the Army tends to underestimate actual requirements.

Assuming a post-Vietnam Army strength of about 900,000, approximately 200,000 new

accessions would be required annually. In fiscal year 1969, the United States Army Recruiting Command obtained 200,775 first-term enlistments; of these, according to the 1968 Department of Defense survey, 58 percent were draft motivated.<sup>11</sup> If these data hold true in a future all-volunteer environment, the Army can be expected to experience an annual enlisted shortfall of 115,676. To prevent this shortfall, dramatic action directed at personnel procurement and retention is required. Without draft motivation, input to officer producing programs will decline. ROTC enrollment has already declined dramatically since 1968-69. However, because ROTC production, like the United States Military Academy, is a fairly fixed program with a two- to four-year lead time, officer procurement in the near future is not considered critical. Supporting this conclusion are the reduced officer requirements in a declining force structure and the option to expand other officer producing programs such as Officer Candidate Schools.

The outlook for procurement of medical specialists and technicians is not as optimistic. The continuing shortage of personnel in every health occupation will generate more competition for their services. Without the draft it would be difficult, if not impossible, to attract sufficient medical personnel. Not only would the accessions obtained by the "doctor draft" be lost, but so would those who are propelled by the draft to seek admission to military medical training programs.<sup>12</sup>

It is recognized that the preceding analysis reduces the problem to its simplest quantitative form. There are other influences on gain and loss rates which were not considered. Significant among these are increased or decreased international threats, unemployment rates among the prime age groups, and most important, public image of the military. This notwithstanding, even a cursory examination leads to the conclusion that in the absence of additional incentives, there will be quantitative problems under the all-volunteer concept.

## QUALITY

A military force derives its vitality from the experience and capabilities of the personnel of which it is composed. No organization can function effectively if all of its people are minimally qualified. A military establishment restricted to an input level just sufficient to meet minimum aptitude scores would lack provisions for the career element of the force, with its cadre of combat leaders, technicians, and men of higher skills.

Since 1941, the military requirement for technical and scientific skills has more than doubled, while the requirement for exclusively military skills has declined by two-thirds.<sup>13</sup> The question which confronts the military is whether, without the draft, it can meet the requirements of ever-increasing sophistication in technology and weaponry.

What is often overlooked is the fact that the draft not only affects the quantity, but also the quality composition of the armed forces. The characteristics of first-term enlistees who were draft motivated in 1968 are revealing. Draft pressure to enlist was substantially higher for those over 20 years of age when compared to the 17-19 year old group (70 percent vs. 48 percent). When compared to those with less than a high school education, high school graduates and those with at least some college were also more inclined to enlist because of the impending threat of the draft (33 percent vs. 50 percent and 72 percent). These data indicate that as age and educational levels rise, so does draft motivation.

The military services also receive many non-prior service personnel who have civilian acquired skills, such as those in law, engineering or the computer field, which are usable without extensive additional training. The savings in advanced individual training dollars is considerable, amounting to about \$60 million each year for the Army alone. Interestingly, a review of Army records for the months of March, April, and May 1969, reveals that 90 percent of these direct accessions entered the Army through the draft and only 10 percent by enlistment.<sup>14</sup>

If quality declines seriously under a

volunteer system, it will not only affect the internal structure of the armed services but also their effectiveness as a fighting force. This is particularly true with the Army. It must be remembered that while the basic requirements of leadership, courage, and practical intelligence for the fighting man are still in demand, these alone are no longer sufficient to cope with the technical advances and future needs of a modern volunteer Army.

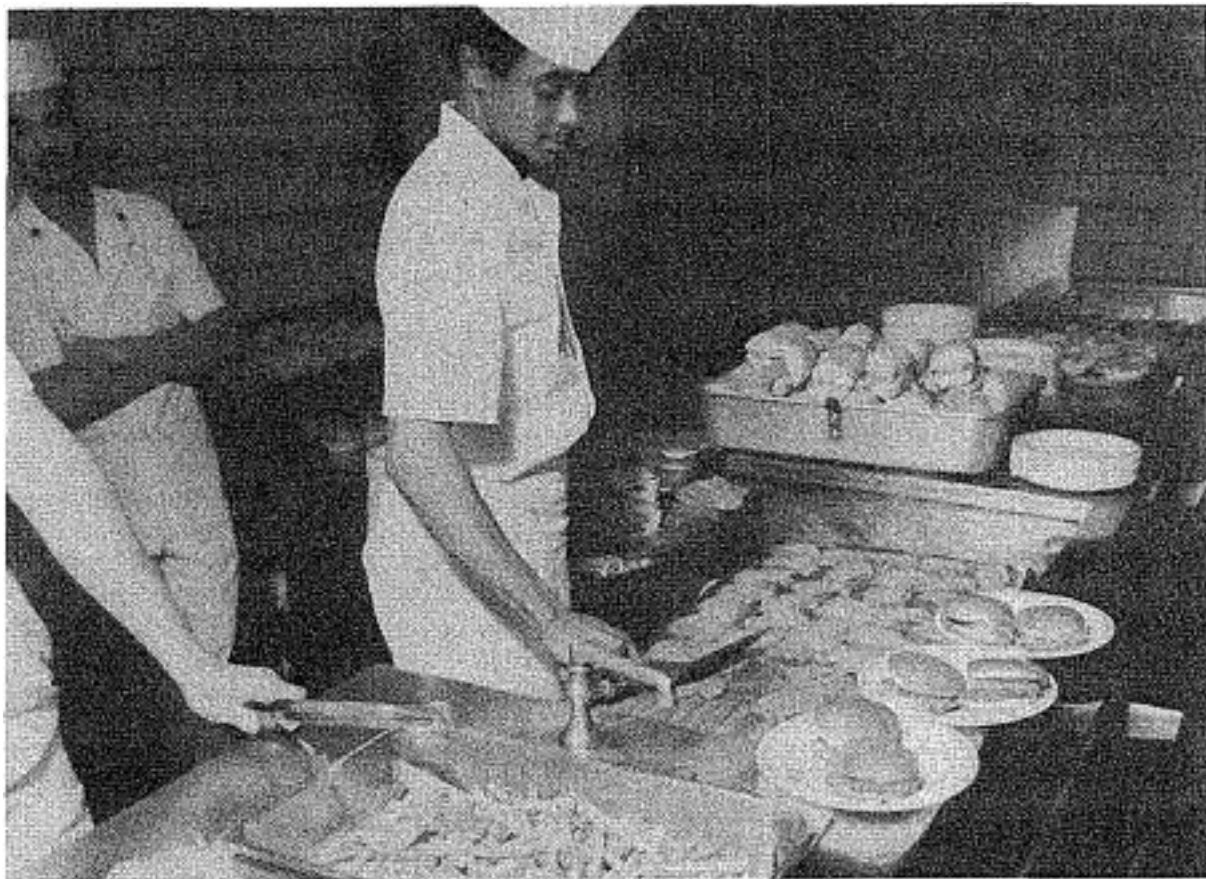
Another ramification of lower quality personnel is discipline. Discipline is the *sine qua non* of an effective military force. An examination of Army statistics in 1969 revealed a direct relationship between low educational levels and stockade strength.<sup>15</sup> While constituting only 19 percent of the total Army population, soldiers with less than a high school education represent nearly 77 percent of the population of the Army's correctional holding detachments. There are over twice as many representing the lower mental category in these holding detachments than their Army-wide strength warrants. It is also interesting to note that during the 1947-48 "no draft" period, there was a significant drop in the average mental category with an attendant rise in courts martial rates.

Quality is as critical as quantity in the establishment of a viable and responsive modern volunteer force. Standards must be maintained and incentives developed which will compete for the kind of manpower the services need. The defense of our nation demands nothing less.

## FLEXIBILITY

Military flexibility is measured by two standards—the ability to meet first, short-term, and second, long-range demands for trained personnel and units. The active forces exist to meet the national security requirements of a sudden crisis, and Reserve Components must be able to provide reinforcing personnel and units in the near term. Selective Service must supply the long-range needs.

Although the ready reserve strength is



US ARMY

*Short order cafeteria line in the new Army.*

nearly at its statutory limitation, the vast majority of these men enlisted because of draft pressure. The exact number of draft-induced personnel serving in the Reserve Components remains a matter of conjecture. However, a 1968 Department of Defense survey revealed that 80 percent of the first-term Reserve Component volunteers were draft-motivated.<sup>16</sup> Other analyses have placed this figure at over 90 percent.

It seems certain that the current high manning level enjoyed by the reserves is a direct result of the draft. These draft-motivated enlistments have benefited the reserves in several ways:

- They have provided reserve units with a waiting list of young men;
- They have insured a high level of participation and performance because of the

threat of being ordered back to active duty for unsatisfactory performance; and,

- They have provided more highly educated accessions than could otherwise have been expected.

The removal of the draft would eliminate these benefits and cause a precipitous drop in ready reserve strength. Unpublished statistics of an Army task group studying the all-volunteer concept estimated that without the draft and additional incentives, the combined enlisted drill strength of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve would drop to ineffective levels within five years.<sup>17</sup>

In the absence of the draft, the manpower procurement problems of the reserves will center on four areas: first, the loss of draft-induced enlistments (which will probably result in a general lowering of age



and educational levels); second, a general reluctance among men to sign an initial enlistment obligation for six years of service (which will in turn probably result in a reduction of the current six-year term to three years, tending to double turnover rates); third, keen competition from business and industry for part-time service; and finally, the need to train recruiters and develop an effective reserve recruiting program.

The task will not be easy. The economic and social factors which motivated voluntary enlistments in the reserves prior to World War II are no longer operative. Pay, as a supplement to income, is no longer as important. With few exceptions, armories are no longer the focal point for community and social activities. Recognition and social acceptance for reserve participation have declined sharply. While patriotism still motivates many, in today's sociopolitical environment it is not strong enough to solve the procurement problems of the reserves or the active forces.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

In 1605, Frances Bacon wrote, "If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties." This paper has emphasized some of the many doubts regarding the feasibility of the all-volunteer armed force. Yet well-developed studies indicate that with the proper mix of incentives and benefits, military manpower procurement and retention can be improved to a point where a peacetime all-volunteer armed force can be sustained. Why, then, state the doubts? Because many powerful opponents of the volunteer concept tend to see only the doubts and make little effort to remove them through rational analysis. But unless these doubts are erased, they will continue to compound the change-resistant nature of bureaucracy in which there exists gentle footdragging when it comes to approving and implementing new concepts and procedures required to achieve the all-volunteer armed force.

The Department of Defense and the

military services launched an all-out effort to achieve the President's goal to end the draft. Important programs have been developed to compete for quality manpower among today's youth. Notable among these is the Army's effort known as the Modern Volunteer Army (MVA).

The MVA effort is probably the most misinterpreted and misunderstood program ever initiated by Department of the Army. Whenever MVA or VOLAR (its experimental counterpart) is mentioned, many military professionals and public officials immediately perceive a permissive Army with beer in the barracks, relaxed standards of discipline, long hair, and "go go" girls. Nothing could be further from the truth; yet this perception of the Modern Volunteer Army Programs persists. If the Modern Volunteer Army Program is not what it is perceived to be, what is it?

Succinctly stated, MVA is a comprehensive effort directed toward strengthening professionalism and improving Army life, thereby enhancing the image of the Army and significantly increasing enlistments.<sup>18</sup>

It was recognized from the beginning that the key to a better Army was the development of highly skilled small units. This is not possible if the men who comprise these units are available only on a part-time basis.

Relieving soldiers from time-consuming tasks such as Kitchen Police, hauling garbage, firing furnaces, or cutting grass was not designed to pamper soldiers, but to return them to their commanders and sergeants so that the skills of their profession could be honed and their talents moulded into proud and disciplined units.

Elimination of reveille and permitting 3.2 beer in the barracks were not permissive acts. They were demonstrations of the Army's attempt to treat those who do not abuse the privilege as mature men.

Reducing the number of mandatory training requirements and elimination of much of the inspection and statistical pressure were designed to free the commander to conduct his unit training more effectively and capitalize on his good judgment and

experience without excessive interference from above.

These and other actions were combined into a program to achieve a modern, more professional, and satisfying Army. To capitalize on these initiatives, a massive advertising campaign was developed to include a 10-week test of paid radio and television commercials. The recruiter force was nearly doubled and many more recruiter stations were opened. To assist recruiters in their effort to increase enlistments substantially, a unit-of-choice enlistment program was initiated and other attractive new enlistment options were offered.

Although all facets of the Modern Volunteer Army Program are important, the heart of the effort is centered in a field experiment which began modestly in early 1971 and was expanded greatly in subsequent months. Known as VOLAR (Volunteer Army), it targets on the Army's principal problem: attracting and retaining the quantity and quality of personnel needed for the combat arms.

VOLAR involves a test of "resource supported" actions to determine which are the most productive and cost effective. It is essentially a "cut and try" approach designed to test and evaluate under local conditions those measures which contribute best to improved Army life and strengthened professionalism. Those initiatives which prove to be most effective will be selected for Army-wide application during FY 1973. Examples of actions being tested at VOLAR installations include those designed to improve leadership, increase job proficiency and job satisfaction, produce better trained and more capable units, improve living conditions for the soldier and his family, and experiment with programs to deal with the societal problems of the 70's such as drug abuse, race relations, and Army image.

This is what the Modern Volunteer Army Program is. It is not the cause of the troubling problems of drug abuse, racial conflict, and violent dissent which confront the Army today. It is not a "giveaway" program which compromises essential operational standards in a shortsighted effort to entice more people

to volunteer. It is fundamentally a developmental program which can revitalize the professional pride and technical competence of the people whose business it is to guarantee the defense of this nation. To see it otherwise is to miss it wholly.

If this is the kind of Army we all seek, and if it is the kind MVA advocates, then why do so many oppose it? The reasons are not always easy to isolate. Some are purely emotional or philosophical in nature. Some are pragmatic. Still others stem from operational shortcomings in the program or mistakes in its implementation and from psychological causes dealing with internalized determinants of human behavior.

Those who oppose a completely volunteer armed force on emotional or philosophical grounds represent a conscientious body in our society who are greatly concerned with the defense of our nation and the effectiveness of our armed forces. They cannot be faulted seriously for a deep dedication which has imbued in them a belief that all young men owe their country a military obligation. However, their emotional involvement often impedes realistic thinking and the tendency is to disregard pragmatic evidence in favor of philosophical arguments.

They fail to recognize that as desirable as universal military training may appear to be, the manpower pool in the United States has grown to a point where two million young men turn 18 each year. Even at a 50 percent rejection rate, the armed forces could not accommodate the training requirements imposed if all were required to serve. To do so would necessitate a much larger training base, an increase in the size of the regular forces, and the opening of many new bases at a time when the reverse is true. Even if these requirements could be accommodated, the cost would be far above that acceptable to the American people.

A compulsory national service concept would only compound the problem since females would be added to the pool and eligibles would increase to four million each year. Even with a voluntary national service program, it is doubtful—given the attitude of youth today toward military service—that

more would voluntarily enlist in the armed forces than could be expected under current conditions.

Many argue that even though we might attract sufficient numbers of volunteers to support the force levels expected in the 70's, the armed forces would be composed of the black and the poor. This objection has no basis in fact. Army research and that of the Presidential Commission indicate that blacks are represented in the armed forces today in about the same ratio as their national proportion. Army projections reveal that under the volunteer concept, the black composition of the Army will rise from its current level of 13 percent to about 16.5 percent by 1980.<sup>19</sup> The Presidential Commission estimates an all-volunteer Army would be composed of no more than 18 percent black.<sup>20</sup> Three other important considerations support these projections: first, enlistment ratios between blacks and caucasians have remained relatively constant over time; second, built-in controls through the Quality Management Program (up or out) preclude dominance by the disadvantaged—they can't compete; third, many of the blacks and the poor have alienated themselves from the "establishment" and reversal of this trend will be long and tedious.

Nor would an all-volunteer force be composed of mercenaries. A mercenary serves for pay alone without allegiance to country. The volunteers we seek are not unconcerned about this country and they will enlist for a variety of reasons, including reasonable pay and a sense of duty. If pay is the only criterion for becoming a mercenary, then we have a whole country full of them.

Pragmatically, the most compelling argument against the all-volunteer armed force is the cost. There is fear that the defense budget will not be increased to provide for the increased costs of an all-volunteer force. As a result Department of Defense will have to cut back expenditures in other areas, thus contributing to the deterioration of our military posture. There is little question that increased pay and the cost of other incentives will drive the cost of an all-volunteer force

higher than a draft-supported force of the same size. No one knows what that cost will be. Estimates range from \$3 to \$17 billion in additional annual expenditures. This wide range of judgments prevails, because it is almost impossible to predict future human behavior and accurately relate increased incentives to increased enlistments. Assuming a post-Vietnam force level of from 2.25 to 2.5 million men, a reasonable estimate would seem to be \$5 to \$6 billion additional each year. This does not seem unreasonable when it is realized that, the volunteer question aside, the quality of military life ought to be equal with that of the civilian community.

Among many Army professionals, operational shortcomings, mistakes in implementation, as well as psychological hang-ups, all interacted to form unfavorable attitudes toward the Modern Volunteer Army Program. To understand why, one must first understand the events leading to the creation of the office of the Special Assistant for the Modern Volunteer Army (SAMVA).

During the 1969-70 period, the official Army position favored the creation of a peacetime all-volunteer Army; however, statements of some high Army officials suggested less than full support for the concept. For example, General Westmoreland was quoted in an interview conducted by *US News and World Report* as favoring an all-volunteer Army.<sup>21</sup> However, in testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee, both he and his former Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Lieutenant General Albert Connor, expressed reservations. General Connor stated: "I do not necessarily feel that an all-volunteer Army is desirable. . . . I feel each of our young men has an obligation to serve. I cannot see an all-professional Army doing much more than separating away from the people."

This kind of high level contradiction contributed greatly to unsupporting attitudes. It reinforced traditional policies and procedures and gave tacit support to resisting changes advocated to achieve the volunteer concept.

In September 1970, pressure was exerted on the military services from the highest levels

to show support for and progress toward the President's goal to end the draft. Suddenly and dramatically, in October 1970, the Army Chief of Staff announced full support for the volunteer concept and, as noted at the beginning of this paper, committed the Army fully to the task. At the same time he appointed Lieutenant General George I. Forsythe as his special assistant to direct the effort. This sudden change in direction created many false impressions and produced what might be termed "culture shock" among many professional soldiers.

The task of General Forsythe and his small staff has not been an easy one. Almost overnight a master program had to be developed, actions costed, funds identified, and progress toward this difficult goal demonstrated. Complicating this process were SAMVA's cross-functional responsibilities which cut across all Army staff agencies and

generated natural resentment. In addition, Department of Defense and Congressional roadblocks further impeded rapid progress.

Because of the lack of funds, or approval, or both, the initial changes thrust upon the field were those that cost little or no money and, for the most part, affected traditional military values (beer in the barracks, elimination of reveille, etc.). To many military professionals, these steps appeared to be superficial and implied a move toward permissiveness. Also, too often the first word of these dramatic changes reached those in the field who had to implement them through the pages of *Army Times* or other unofficial publications. Neither the unit leadership nor its members were aware of the real purpose behind the changes or their part in the overall program.

The Army's Master Program for the Modern Volunteer Army was available in its



US ARMY

*LTG George I. Forsythe, the special assistant to the Chief of Staff, US Army, for the Modern Volunteer Army (SAMVA) tours the US Army Personnel Center at Oakland Army Base.*

initial form by January 1971, but its distribution was stopped because it had not gone through the "normal" staffing at Department of the Army. Admittedly, it was prepared rapidly so that the field could be informed early of the objective and the underlying purpose of various actions, and how they contributed to the ultimate goal—to improve professionalism, create a better Army life, and enhance the public prestige of the Army. Although it was not as "finished" as the current master program, it might have countered much of the opposition, had it been distributed as an interim document. Instead, information reached the field in a piecemeal fashion creating confusion and doubt. The official master program was not distributed until nearly a year after the birth of SAMVA.

The older officers and noncommissioned officers were not ready for the dramatic changes which were thrust upon them by MVA. They could not see a need for change, since the traditional ways of doing things had served the military and the country well in the past. Many of the MVA actions disrupted conditioned ways of doing business. This in turn gave rise to tensions and stress; and defensive behavior patterns emerged. This psychological manipulation contributed significantly to hostile attitudes toward the agent of change, which in this case was MVA and VOLAR.

In defense, it can only be stated that SAMVA did not experience a natural birth. Because of the urgency of time, it came into being by caesarean and grew to maturity before its musculature was developed enough to support it. It was not expected to solve all problems immediately, yet many thought it should and would.

Mistakes were made. If one were required to select a single error it would have to be failure in communications. It is too late to begin again, but much could be salvaged by a revitalized information program which explains to every soldier what has gone on before, what is to be expected in the future, and how it all fits into an integrated program to create a better, more professionally competent Army. A *modern* Army, not a mod, permissive one.

Such an information effort requires more than the distribution of a master program and more than the efforts of that small band of SAMVA "warriors." It requires the total commitment and support of the Army leadership from the Chief of Staff to the squad leader. It should be mounted now and include feedback on the successes of MVA. For it has indeed been successful despite the early mistakes.

In the short time that it has been in existence, SAMVA, in association with other Army staff and command agencies, has increased the recruiter force by 100 percent and opened 600 new recruiter stations. Overall enlistments since January 1971 have been 10 percent greater, despite declining draft pressure. Combat arms enlistments for calendar year 1971 are 800 percent greater than for the same period last year. Interestingly, Department of the Army surveys show that 8,000 of these new enlistments are directly attributable to paid radio and television advertising.<sup>22</sup> The cost was \$1,250 per enlistment, not the \$10,000 often quoted by opponents of the program.

Many steps have been taken to strengthen professionalism. Training has been decentralized; Department of the Army imposed training requirements have been eliminated; leadership seminars have been introduced; guard and details have been reduced; and civilians have been hired for KP, thus returning more soldiers to soldiering, adventurous training, and improved basic training.

Army life has been improved by the elimination of unnecessary and demeaning activities; by undertaking VOLAR projects at selected installations; by putting money and effort into barracks repair; by paying more attention to soldiers as individuals; and by lessening turbulence.

Perhaps the most valuable byproduct of the MVA effort is that, for the first time, the Army is taking a hard, scientific look at leadership and training. Old ways of doing things are being questioned. Human factors are receiving long-delayed attention. It is doubtful that this would have occurred outside the context of the Modern Volunteer Army.

Laudable as these efforts may be, the Army and the other military services cannot do it alone. Funds must be provided by Congress so that we can properly take care of our servicemen and the American people must lend their full support to the effort, particularly the enormously influential news media.

As these pages are written, the time to reach the President's goal of zero inductions draws nearer. The challenge is tough and the job is not easy. Opposition from some quarters will continue because the nature of the institutional changes required and the rapidity with which they must be implemented precludes the deliberate staffing so dear to the hearts of the bureaucrats. There is also the danger that high velocity actions which were initially launched will lose their impetus unless steps are taken to insure the continued zeal of those who replace the original architects of the Modern Volunteer Army Program. Nevertheless, the all-volunteer armed force remains an attainable national objective. Even if we fail to achieve that goal, we will have brought long delayed improvements to the quality of life of those who must wear this nation's uniform.

## NOTES

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